

VZCZCXR0889
PP RUEHAG RUEHROV
DE RUEHMD #1198/01 1700148

ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 190148Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2804
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA PRIORITY 2812
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0202

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 001198

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/16/2017

TAGS: PREL EUN SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH VIEWS IN ADVANCE OF JUNE 18 GAERC

REF: STATE 80034

MADRID 00001198 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: Spanish Deputy Political Director Carlos Fernandez-Arias said he expected that Cuba would view with skepticism Spain's inability to change the EU Common Position and eliminate the restrictive measures, but the Cubans might still welcome the chance to open dialogue with the EU. Spain continues to insist on the need for a UNSCR in Kosovo and is wary of a unilateral Kosovar independence declaration. The fluidity of the situation in the Middle East means the GAERC's discussion could go anywhere, but Fernandez-Arias said that now is not a time for boilerplate declarations. The meeting between Javier Solana and Ali Larijani on Iranian nuclear programs produced no result other than an Iranian commitment to keep meeting. New French Foreign Minister Kouchner was expected to propose new language on Darfur. END SUMMARY.

//CUBA//

¶12. (C) Poloff met with MFA Deputy Political Director Carlos Fernandez-Arias on June 14 to discuss Spain's views on the June 18 GAERC. Fernandez-Arias said that there would be no open discussion on Cuba at the GAERC, though Foreign Minister Moratinos or the Czech Foreign Minister might bring it up. Fernandez-Arias said that there had been lots of different opinions in the review of the Common Position, and the compromise solution had been to "move in a different direction" from the debate over the Common Position and Restrictive Measures. He said the document the GAERC would approve would not change the Common Position and would not lift Restrictive Measures, but it would note that the situation in Cuba has changed. It would note, however, that the change had not altered the state of freedom on the island. In addition to the standard language on Cubans controlling their own destiny, freedom of political prisoners and increased internet access and press freedom, the document will state the EU's commitment to remain engaged with the Cuban opposition and civil society. In addition, the document will propose opening a political, economic and human rights dialogue between the EU and Cuba, and it invites an unspecified Cuban delegation to visit Brussels for discussions. Poloff asked how the Cubans would receive this, and Fernandez-Arias said they would not like it. He was unsure how it would impact the Spanish-Cuban human rights dialogue, but he suspected that the Cubans would continue to go along.

//BALKANS//

¶13. (C) Spain continues to see the EU as not really having unity over Kosovo although almost all nations are prepared to

go along with the Ahtisaari Plan in the interest of internal consensus. Fernandez-Arias said that Spain continues to believe that a UNSC resolution is necessary, even if it takes a little longer than the U.S. and others want. He thought, however, that there would be minimal discussion of Kosovo at the GAERC.

¶4. (C) On Serbia, Fernandez-Arias pointed with satisfaction to the resumption of EU association talks and said that this effort had been well-received by Serbians. The apprehension of Mladic's deputy was also a promising sign. Spain will continue to support engagement and progress with the Serbians.

//MEPP//

¶5. (C) Fernandez-Arias said that the situation is too fluid in the Middle East to really plan any conclusions for the GAERC, but that Ambassadors would likely meet Monday morning to work on a statement. He said that now is not the time for generic statements of support and encouragement, and that what is needed is the imposition of some order in the situation. In Lebanon, he said Spain was very concerned by the recent actions of "the usual suspects."

//IRAN//

¶6. (C) Javier Solana will provide a readout at the GAERC of his May 31 meeting with Ali Larijani in Madrid. Fernandez-Arias said that the meetings had been unproductive, but that the Iranians remained willing to continue meeting. To Fernandez-Arias, the Iranians are buying time to find a way to placate the IAEA and get some of the non-permanent UNSC members such as South Africa to slow down the UNSC. Spain remains committed to the "double track" of strong action at the UN combined with continued EU engagement through Solana.

MADRID 00001198 002.2 OF 002

//SUDAN//

¶7. (C) Fernandez-Arias said Spain is pleased that Sudan appears to have reacted well to the threat of sanctions by consenting to the hybrid mission. He said the challenge for the EU now was to find a way to get aid to the Africans. He expected that French Foreign Minister Kouchner would present a new broad document on Sudan.

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